

1 1. (Three times amended) A method comprising the steps of:
2 maintaining a database of personal information relating to
3 a consumer, the personal information having been previously
4 provided by the consumer and including [consumer-identified]
5 preferred providers identified by the consumer or by prior
6 purchases thereby;
7 receiving a request initiated by the consumer and
8 transmitted over a global communication network to a system;
9 selecting, responsive to the received request initiated by
10 the consumer and based upon the [personal information relating
11 to thereto] request and the preferred providers in the database,
12 at least one name of at least one provider; and
13 forwarding the selected at least one name of the at least
14 one provider from said system to said consumer, wherein said
15 consumer is subsequently capable of choosing a provider from the
16 selected at least one provider to communicate therewith.

1 4. (Amended) The method of Claim [1] 2, wherein said step
2 of selecting further includes the step of using a name linking
3 policy to select the at least one name of the at least one
4 provider while utilizing one or a combination of subject matter
5 information, demographic information and geographic information.

1 18. (Three times amended) A system comprising:

2 a database for storing [consumer-provided] information
3 associated with a consumer, the information including [consumer-
4 identified] preferred providers identified by the consumer or by
5 prior purchases made thereby; and

6 a server for receiving a request initiated by said consumer
7 and transmitted over a global communication network, said server
8 further including:

9 a module for selecting, responsive to the received
10 request and based upon said [information associated with
11 said consumer and] request and said preferred providers
12 stored in the database, at least one name of at least one
13 provider; and

14 a controller for forwarding the selected at least one
15 name of the at least one provider to said consumer, wherein
16 said consumer is then capable of choosing a provider from
17 the selected at least one provider to communicate and,
18 optionally, complete a business transaction therewith.

1 25. (Three times amended) A method for providing a consumer
2 with a customized presentation containing the names of various
3 providers of goods and services that are selected, said method
4 comprising the steps of:

5 storing, within an intermediary system, consumer-provided
6 information associated with said consumer[, the information
7 including consumer-identified preferred providers];

8 receiving a request initiated by said consumer and
9 transmitted over a global communication network to said
10 intermediary system;

11 selecting, responsive to the received request and based
12 upon said information associated with said consumer and stored
13 in said intermediary system, at least one name of at least one
14 provider;

15 forwarding the selected at least one name of the at least
16 one provider within a customized presentation to said consumer,
17 wherein said consumer is then capable of choosing a provider
18 from the selected at least one provider to communicate and,
19 optionally, transact business therewith; [and]

20 operating, within said intermediary system, as an
21 intermediary between said consumer and said chosen provider; and
22 updating he information associated with the consumer based
23 upon a provider chosen thereby with which to transact business.

1 37. (Amended) A method, comprising the steps of:

2 maintaining a database of personal information relating to
3 a consumer, the personal information including a list of at
4 least one preferred provider of goods or services;

5 receiving a search request initiated by the consumer over
6 a global communications network, the request identifying a type
7 of goods or services;

8 identifying one or more providers of the type of goods or
9 services requested based upon the at least one preferred
10 provider;

11 presenting the one or more providers to the consumer; [and]

12 enabling the consumer to complete a transaction with a
13 provider from the one or more providers chosen by the consumer
14 [using the personal information in the database]; and

15 updating the list of at least one preferred provider based
16 upon the one or more providers chosen by the consumer to
17 complete the transaction.

1 45. (Amended) An apparatus for facilitating a transaction
2 between a consumer and a provider of goods or services over
3 communications network, the apparatus being adapted to:

4 maintain a database of personal information relating to a
5 consumer;

6 receive a search request initiated by the consumer over a
7 global communications network, the request identifying a type of
8 goods or services, the search request having a single set of
9 characters forming a plurality of fields, a first field having
10 a common name as between different search requests and a second
11 field identifying the type of goods or services to be searched
12 without specifying a specific provider of goods or services;

13 identify, responsive only to the search request without
14 additional search information being directly provided by the
15 consumer, one or more providers of the type of goods or services
16 requested, the one or more providers being identified based upon
17 the personal information relating to the consumer in the
18 database;

19 present the one or more providers to the consumer; and
20 enable the consumer to complete a transaction with a
21 provider from the one or more providers chosen by the consumer
22 using the personal information in the database.

1 53. (Amended) A method comprising the steps of:
2 maintaining a database of personal information relating to
3 a consumer;
4 receiving a request initiated by the consumer and
5 transmitted over a global communication network to a system,

6 said request having a [domain name associated with a plurality
7 of domain names each of which includes a common domain name
8 element, said domain name] single set of characters forming a
9 plurality of fields, a first field having a common name as
10 between different requests and a second field identifying
11 [goods/services] a type of goods or services without identifying
12 a specific provider thereof;

13 selecting, responsive only to the received request
14 initiated by the consumer without additional search information
15 being directly provided by the consumer and based upon the
16 personal information relating [to] thereto in the database, at
17 least one name of at least one provider; and

18 forwarding the selected at least one name of the at least
19 one provider from said system to said consumer, wherein said
20 consumer is subsequently capable of choosing a provider from the
21 selected at least one provider to communicate therewith.
22

1 61. (Amended) A system comprising:

2 a database for storing information associated with a
3 consumer;

4 a server for receiving a request initiated by said consumer
5 and transmitted over a global communication network, the request

6 comprising a single set of characters representative of typed
7 text, the typed text including a first field having a common
8 name as between different requests and a second field for [,
9 said request including a domain name associated with a plurality
10 of domain names each of which includes a common domain name
11 element, said domain name] identifying [goods/services] at least
12 one type of goods or services without identifying a specific
13 provider thereof, said server further including:

14 a module for selecting, responsive to the received
15 request without additional information directly provided by the
16 consumer and based upon personal information relating to the
17 consumer in the database, at least one name of at least one
18 provider; and

19 a controller for forwarding the selected at least one
20 name of the at least one provider to said consumer, wherein said
21 consumer is thereafter enabled to choose a provider from the
22 selected at least one provider to communicate and selectively
23 complete a transaction therewith.

Please add the following new claims 73-⁷⁹77.

1 73. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising
2 updating the personal information relating to the consumer in
3 the database so that the preferred providers are updated to

4 reflect the consumer choosing a provider from the selected at
5 least one provider to communicate therewith.

1 74. (New) The method of claim 73, wherein the step of
2 updating automatically updates the personal information
3 relating to the consumer in the database so that the preferred
4 providers are updated to reflect the consumer choosing a
5 provider from the selected at least one provider to
6 communicate therewith.

1 75. (New) The system of claim 18, wherein the system
2 automatically updates the information associated with the
3 consumer and stored in the database so that the preferred
4 providers are updated to reflect the consumer choosing a
5 provider from the selected at least one provider with which to
6 complete a transaction.

1 76. (New) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein the personal
2 information relating to the consumer maintained in the
3 database is includes a list of a plurality of consumer-
4 provided names of one or more providers with which the
5 consumer prefers to transact business, and the list is updated